

Milling of Grist & Flour

1. Add
John H. Vardley
Grist wheel pit
Snake Creek

Milling of Grain & Flour

According to John Crook's journal, those who spent the winter of 1860-61 in the fort with their families were:

North Side: John Carlile, John Crook, Thomas Rasband, James Carlile, Fred Giles, Robert S. Duke, Willis Boren, James Davis, Robert Broadhead, Hyrum Oaks, Alfred Johnson, Sam Rooker, William Damaron, James Lamon and John Lee.

East Side: Alex Sessions, Richard Jones, Elisha Thomas, Bradford Sessions, Isaac Cummings, Darwin Walton, John Cummings Sr., Charles N. Carroll, George Damaron, Bailes Sprouse, Thomas Hicken, George Thompson and Norton Jacobs.

South Side: Thomas Moulton, Patrick Carroll, William Forman, John Muir, John M. Murdock, Thomas Todd, Cal Henry and Robert Carlile.

West Side: Jane Clotworthy, Zemira Palmer, James Duke, James Laird, Cub Johnson, John Davis, Robert Parker, Terry Burns, William McDonald, John Hamilton, George W. Clyde, John Witt, Joseph S. McDonald, John Jordan, a Mr. Russell and John McDonald.

By the time Spring was welcomed in 1861 the community of Heber was recognized by Church leaders in Salt Lake City as being large enough to organize into a ward. Thus, early in 1861 Joseph S. Murdock was ordained as bishop of the new ward by President Brigham Young and sent from American Fork to Heber to take charge of Church affairs. He chose as his counselors John W. Witt and Thomas Rasband. John Hamilton served as ward clerk.

Bishop Murdock also served as presiding bishop of the valley and directed the Church efforts of presiding elders who were called in the small communities that had begun to spring up in the valley. These community developments are discussed separately in later chapters.

The year 1861 proved to be a year of many significant accomplishments. With Church activity on an organized basis and the individual homes as well fixed as possible for that time, the settlers began to look to community improvements.

Provisions were made for old and new settlers to plant vegetable gardens outside the fort. Ephraim Smith and William P. Reynolds built a chopper run by horse power to chop wheat for those who could not go to the mills in Provo. While it was still somewhat crude, the chopper was a great help to those who had been grinding their flour in small hand mills.

Another bridge was built over the Provo River, this one located six miles north of Heber on the road to Salt Lake City. A good wagon road was also made through Provo Canyon, with toll being charged for use of the road.

John M. Murdock organized a cooperative sheep herd in 1860 and cared for the sheep during the summer months himself. He was able to take the sheep far enough south to winter out so that they did not need special supplies of hay. This method of caring for the sheep enabled

settlement, of course, was at Heber City, but there were also two small settlements along the Snake Creek, a number of families at Center Creek, some at Charleston, some in Round Valley or Wallsburg, a small cluster of houses at the Sessions spring and a few at a sheep ranch of Melvin Ross, afterwards known as Hailstone's Ranch, about eight miles north of Heber.

The first county road was established on March 3, 1862, and commenced at the Provo River below Manning's (southwest of the town of Charleston) and ran in a northerly direction following the old immigrant trail through the valley, passing by Melvin Ross' ranch and terminating at the northern boundary of the county known then as the Ross Summit.

Another county road was established April 26, 1862 and ran between Heber City and Center Creek and on to a sawmill in Center Creek Canyon.

Four school districts were also designated in April, 1862. They were district No. 1 to include Heber City; No. 2 at the Center Creek settlement; No. 3, the lower settlement on Snake Creek and No. 4 the upper Snake Creek settlement.

The first valuation of property for the county took place in 1862, and according to the report of John Harvey, assessor and collector, the property value in the valley was \$48,350.

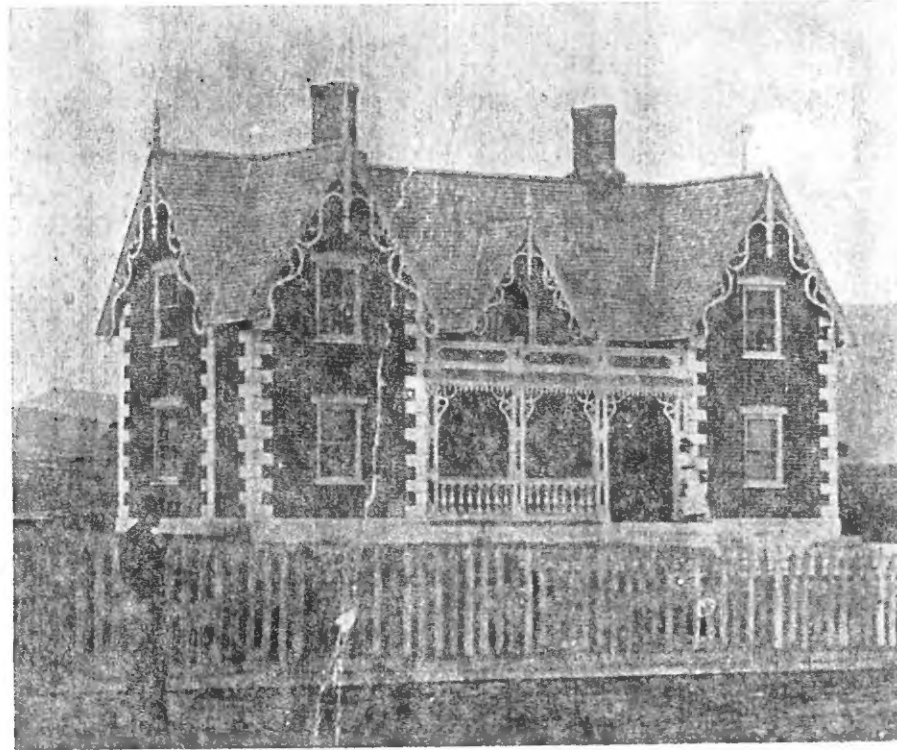
Spring came late in 1862 and it was May 4 before any plowing could be done in the valley. The Church leaders who went to Salt Lake City for general conference sessions in April had to travel on snowshoes to get through the more than four feet of snow still on the ground.

Early in 1862 John H. Van Wagoner finished building a gristmill at Snake Creek's lower settlement. Even though there was no way to separate the smut from the wheat and some of the flour made was very dark, the people were still glad for this added improvement. At times that year the river was so high people couldn't get across to the mill. However, Henry McMullin, a ship builder from Maine, built a boat and the grist was taken back and forth on the boat. It was this same Mr. McMullin that built the first sawmill in the valley. It was owned by William M. Wall and James Adams and located in Center Creek Canyon.

Until the sawmill was built, people had used hand-prepared timber for all their furniture and other needs. Now with cut lumber available the rough furniture was quickly discarded.

Many of the people were able to obtain good wagons from the soldiers in Johnston's Army. The army had camped near Utah Lake until the outbreak of the Civil War in the East. They were summoned to return to the Northern Army's camps and so they sold some of their wagons and their supplies very cheaply rather than carry them back east. Many in Wasatch County obtained the wagons as the troops passed through the valley on their eastern trip.

Community life was well developed by 1862 and the seeds of prosperity and growth planted so well by the early settlers in 1859 were already beginning to bear fruit. Living was difficult, but in overcoming privation and hardship these pioneers found a peace and contentment unequalled even in the modern world of conveniences and super-civilization.



The first brick home in Wasatch County as it was built by Bishop John Watkins in 1868. Hand pressed brick were used, with white sand stone corners. Woodwork on the outside was by Moroni Blood, a Swiss immigrant. Timber and lumber used throughout the home was milled and planed by Henry Coleman Sr. John Watkins, who built the home, had come to Midway from England where he was a noted architect.

GRIST MILLS

Milling was one of the first industries in the Midway area, having its beginning in 1861 when John H. Van Wagoner built the first mill on the old Wood's Farm, known as the Fred Price home site.

The enterprising Mr. Van Wagoner had only been in Midway for about a year when he sensed the need of the people for a mill. He brought the first mill stone to the town by ox team and shaped the stone with hammer and chisel.

Sidney Epperson records in his journal the delight of the people with Mr. Van Wagoner's mill. After stating that the people could now have flour ground, and grain prepared for their cattle, Mr. Epperson wrote "This mill was indeed a blessing for the settlers."

In recent years the stone from this first mill has been placed atop a monument on the Post Office corner by the Daughters of the Utah Pioneers.



The home as it has been preserved today by the family of Bishop Henry T. Coleman who purchased the property in 1904. The traditional English landscaping and the flavor of the original architecture make it one of the scenic attractions in the entire valley.

Early millers of Midway included George Bonner, James Ross, a Mr. Saxey, Brigham Mulliner, Hyrum Horner Dennis, Mark Jeffs and Mr. John Van Wagoner.

The major mill in Midway had its beginnings in 1893 when Mark Jeffs built a large, four-story grist mill on the east side of Midway near the Provo River. This mill was capable of producing 50 barrels of flour every 24 hours. Water from Provo River powered the mill, which was the first roller mill in the county. An additional source of water was the Birkumshaw Springs, about a mile and a half above the mill. Water was stored in a large pond overnight and then used as desired during the day.

Because Mr. Jeffs hired transient millers to operate his mill, the venture failed to succeed and was closed in 1900.

However, Nels Joseph Johnson, a young miller, and native of Wasatch County, purchased the mill in 1903 and started operating it again. Mr. Johnson had been working for Abram Hatch in the Heber Flour Mills, but moved his wife and family to Midway as soon as he purchased the mill. He is reported to have paid Mr. Jeffs \$10,000 for the facility.

Through the years the mill has been successfully managed by Mr. Johnson and his sons. During World War I it ran at full capacity producing flour for the government. Most of this production was shipped to Houston, Texas. Flour was also shipped to San Francisco during the tragic earthquake of 1906.

Improvements made at the mill during the years included cleaning machines for the wheat, chopping facilities and flour bleaching equipment. Hundreds of tons of wheat were also stored in the mill.

For many years the mill was operated under the name of Peoples Roller Mills, and then later the Johnson Milling Company. When Mr. Johnson died in 1950, his son, Ralph J. Johnson took over the management. The mill is now the property of the Lifferth Manufacturing Co. It is under the management of Henry Lifferth. The company makes small metal tools.